



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **DEBRA BOWEN**

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DEBRA BOWEN SWORN IN AS CALIFORNIA'S 30TH SECRETARY OF STATE

SACRAMENTO – Debra Bowen was sworn in today as California's 30th Secretary of State, making her only the sixth woman in California history to be elected to statewide constitutional office and only the seventh woman to hold such an office.

To watch today's inaugural ceremony, which was broadcast live over the Internet, go to www.sos.ca.gov and click on the tab reading "View Debra Bowen's Inauguration."

"I spent 14 years in the Legislature working to build people's confidence in democracy by opening up government and I will bring that same philosophy to the Secretary of State's office," said Secretary Bowen. "You don't nurture liberty, encourage honesty, and build trust in our government and our elected officials – especially in this day and age – by restricting access to information. You do it by opening up those doors and inviting people like you to participate in the decision-making process because, after all, it is your government."

California Third District Court of Appeals Justice George Nicholson administered the oath of office today to Bowen before some 300 family members, friends, and well-wishers in the Secretary of State's auditorium in Sacramento. Hundreds of others watched the ceremony live on the Internet.

"The first step toward restoring people's faith and confidence in the integrity of our democracy is to conduct business in an open, transparent fashion that promotes public debate and discussion," continued Bowen. "That will be the hallmark of my administration, the foundation, if you will, and decisions about specific programs and projects will be based on those principles of openness and transparency."

Born in Rockford, Illinois, Bowen graduated from Michigan State University in 1976 and earned her law degree from the University of Virginia in 1979. In 1984, she started her own California law firm specializing in small business start-ups, tax law, land use, and environmental issues. Her long history of community activism began in the 1980's when she became involved with her local Neighborhood Watch program. Bowen represented the 53rd Assembly District for three terms (1992-1998) in the Legislature, then represented the 28th Senate District for two terms (1998-2006) before she was elected California's 30th Secretary of State on November 7, 2006.

Bowen is married to Mark Nechodom, a research scientist with the U.S. Forest Service.

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The women who have held statewide constitutional office in California are:

- o Ivy Baker Priest (Treasurer), 1967-75
- o March Fong Eu (Secretary of State), 1975-1994
- o Elizabeth Whitney (Treasurer), 1987-1989 [appointed]
- o Kathleen Brown (Treasurer), 1991-1995
- o Kathleen Connell (Controller), 1995-2003
- o Delaine Eastin (Superintendent of Public Instruction), 1995-2003
- o Debra Bowen (Secretary of State), 2007-

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